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(54) **METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR STREAM AGGREGATION IN A MULTIPROTOCOL LABEL SWITCHING NETWORK ENVIRONMENT**

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(\*) **Notice:** This patent issued on a continued prosecution application filed under 37 CFR 1.53(d), and is subject to the twenty year patent term provisions of 35 U.S.C. 154(a)(2).

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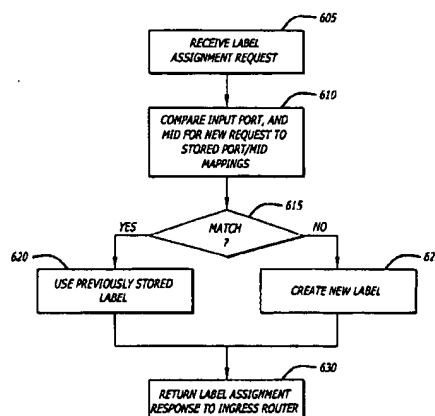
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method and apparatus for stream aggregation in a multi-protocol label switching network environment. According to one embodiment, the method comprises receiving a label assignment request that includes an identification of a path followed by the label assignment request through the network and determining whether the path has been used by any of a plurality of previous label assignment requests. A new label is assigned for the path if the path has not been used by any of the plurality of previous label assignment requests. Otherwise, a previously assigned label is assigned.

26 Claims, 7 Drawing Sheets



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